

Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AGR-05 AGRE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

FEA-01 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00 ERDA-05 COME-00 DODE-00

EB-07 EPA-01 INR-07 IO-13 L-03 NSF-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, MX

SUBJ: REPORTS OF CONTAMINATION OF FISH

1. SUMMARY: CONTAMINATION OF MEXICAN FISH OFF VERACRUZ COAST AND FROM LAKE CHAPALA HAS BEEN REPORTED BY THE DIRECTORATE OF WATER USES AND POLLUTION PREVENTION. END SUMMARY.

2. EXCELSIOR OF SEPT 7. REPORTED ON INVESTIGATIONS CARRIED OUT UNDER ELOY URROZ, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF WATER USES AND POLLUTION PREVENTION, SECRETARIAT OF HYDRAULIC RESOURCES. ACCORDING TO REPORT, MEXICAN COAST OFF COATZACOALCOS, VERACRUZ, IS POLLUTED WITH MERCURY DISCHARGES OF PETRO-CHEMICAL COMPLEX AT PAJARITOS. THERE IS NO PRESENT KNOWLEDGE OF ANY RESULTANT SICKNESSES OR DEATHS BY CONSUMERS OF FISH OR SEAFOOD. IN ADDITION TO CONTAINING MERCURY IN AMOUNTS DEFINITELY DANGEROUS TO HEALTH, EXCELSIOR REPORTED THAT TESTS REVEAL THAT FISH SUCH AS HUACHINANGO (RED SNAPPER), CAZON (DOGFISH), ROBALO (SNOOK) AND CURBINA (CORVINA) ALSO CONTAIN LEAD AND CADMIUM FROM THE SAME SOURCES. URROZ WAS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT SHRIMP, RED SNAPPER AND WHITE FISH ARE THE ONLY PRODUCTS DANGEROUS TO HEALTH AND

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THAT THE PRODUCTS ARE DISTRIBUTED IN MEXICO CITY AND

EXPORTED ABROAD. TESTS MADE BY THE UNIVERSITY OF GUADALAJARA OF THE WHITE FISH FROM LAKE CHAPALA WERE REPORTED BY EXCELSIOR TO SHOW HIGH LEVELS OF MERCURY. THESE FISH ARE REPORTEDLY SOLD IN THE BETTER U.S. RESTAURANTS. URROZ IS FURTHER QUOTED AS SAYING THAT PRACTICALLY ALL MEXICAN WATERS ARE POLLUTED TO SOME EXTENT AND THAT INDUSTRY MUST COMPLY WITH REGULATIONS OF THE SUBSECRETARIAT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT.

3. WHEN ASKED ABOUT VALIDITY OF EXCELSIOR ARTICLE, URROS TOLD SCICOUNS THAT HE WAS MISQUOTED AND MIS-UNDERSTOOD BY EXCELSIOR REPORTERS. HE SAID THAT A WRITTEN CORRECTION WAS SENT TO THE PAPER. HE NOTED THAT POLLUTION AND CONTAMINATION OF MEXICAN FOODSTUFFS WAS A CONTINUING PROBLEM IN MEXICO AND THAT THE PEOPLE NEEDED TO BE MADE AWARE OF POTENTIAL HAZARDS INVOLVED. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO URROZ, THE ONLY REAL PROBLEM AREA IS IN THE INDUSTRIAL ZONE ALONG THE COATZACOALCOS ESTURAY. THE POLLUTION LEVEL OF THE OTHER FISHERIES IS NOT SO HIGH AS TO YET BE DANGEROUS. IN ANY CASE, HE SAID, THE FDA MAKES SURE THAT ONLY SAFE UNCONTAMINATED FISH GETS INTO THE UNITED STATES. URROZ ALSO TOLD SCICOUNS THAT THE EXCELSIOR ARTICLE MAY GET HIM INTO TROUBLE WITH HIS BOSS, THE SECRETARY OF HYDRAULIC RESOURCES.

4. EXCELSIOR OF SEPT 8 CARRIED URROZ DISCLAIMER. ACCORDING TO THIS REPORT THE CONTAMINATION OF LAKE CHAPALA HAS NOT REPEAT NOT REACHED AN ALARMING LEVEL ALTHOUGH PARASITES HAVE BEEN FOUND IN FISH FROM THE LAKE. LAB ANALYSES HAVE SHOWN THAT THE FISH DO NOT REPEAT NOTCONTAIN HEAVY METALS. STUDIES ARE BEING CARRIED OUT DAILY BY THE CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS LIMNOLOGICAS OF GUADALAJARA IN CHAPALA AND OTHER MEXICAN LAKES FROM HUMAN ACTIVITIES. THE SECRETARIAT OF HYDRAULIC RESOURCES ALSO SAID THAT THROUGH THE NATIONAL WATER QUALITY MONITORING NETWORK, INFORMATION IS OBTAINED ABOUT THE MAJORITY OF BODIES OF WATER INCLUDING THE COATZACOALCOS, LERMA AND SANTIAGO RIVERS.

5. FOLLOWING QUANTITIES OF MERCURY HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FISH FROM THE COATZACOALCOS RIVER: CHUCHMITE - 0.54 PARTS PER MILLION; STRIPED MOJARRA - 0.59 PARTS PER MILLION; SHRIMP 0.475 PARTS PER MILLION AND FEMALE CRAB - 1.56 PARTS PER MILLION. LEAD AND MERCURY HAVE BEEN FOUND IN WATERS DISCHARGED INTO COATZACOALCOS ESTURAY BY THE FOLLOWING INDUSTRIES: TETREATILO DE MEXICO, S.A., INDUSTRIAS QUIMICAS DEL ISTMO AND FERTILIZANTES FOSFATADOS DE MEXICO LOCATED IN THE PETROCHEMICAL COMPLEX OF

PAJARITOS.
THOMPSON

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